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which I have treated on the principles above stated. I have heard of deaths from these causes, but none have fallen within my observation. One case, that of a colonist, nearly proved fatal, but I supposed it was from the time the poison had to act in the system before he came under treatment. He was a sawyer, and was in the act of preparing a log for the saw, when he was bitten by a snake which he observed retreating. Being intent upon his work at the time, he did not get a good view of it, but said it presented a green aspect, probably another species. He had but one companion, who carried him on his back for two or three hours, when he reached my premises. The wound was in the foot; this was greatly swollen, as was also the leg as high as the knees. He seemed to be greatly prostrated and in great pain; vomited several times a light-colored watery fluid. I immediately administered, in large doses, strong rum and sulphate of morphine, and made a free incision over the wound. So reduced was the vitality of the parts that scarcely any blood flowed at first, but a passive hemorrhage came on subsequently, to stop which the blood vessels had to be taken up and tied. The whole limb up to the groin, became enormously swollen; a bad sore followed from the incision, and the cuticle of the leg, to a great extent, came off. He recovered at the end of three weeks.

This statement is made in works on Natural History, and by travellers, that the centipedes and scorpions of tropical climates are deadly poison. But in respect to those of West Africa, it is incorrect. Many stings from both have come within my notice, and have proved no more than the stings of bees and wasps."

Dr. Morton offered the following remarks on the ancient Peruvian crania from Pisco, deposited by him this evening.

He pointed out the fact that all the crania in his collection from this locality, upwards of seventy in number, have been modified by pressure into artificial forms, in one of which the head is extended or elongated in the upward direction, though in very different degrees, while in another class, the pressure has been so applied, as to flatten the forehead, and to widen and elongate the whole structure, in the manner yet practised by the Indian tribes of Oregon. Dr. Morton read translations from the works of several of the earliest travellers and historians of Peru,—Cieza, Torquanda and Garciloso de la Vega, containing descriptions of these very forms of the head, and the artificial processes that were then in use to produce them.

Dr. M. concluded by remarking, that if no other evidence had descended to us than the statements of these authors, the facts would never have been believed; but we have now abundant proof of their correctness, in the multitudes of desiccated bodies that yet remain in the Peruvian cemeteries, and which, in that dry climate, have resisted the ravages of time and temperature for hundreds, and perhaps for thousands of years.

April 18th, 1848.

Vice President MORTON in the Chair.

A letter was read from William C. Redfield, Esq., dated New York, April 17, 1848, expressing his thanks and those of Professor Agassiz,

for the specimens of fossil fishes loaned to them by the permission of the Society, for comparison and description, and returning the same to the Cabinet.

April 25th, 1848.

Vice President MORTON in the Chair.

The Committee to whom was referred Dr. Bachman's communications in relation to the generation of the Opossum, and also the letter of Dr. Middleton Michel, of Charleston, S. C., on the same subject, addressed to the Rev. Dr. Bachman, reported in favor of publication.

Notes on the Generation of the Virginian Opossum (Didelphis Virginiana.)

By JOHN BACHMAN, D. D.

Under an impression that the following extracts from notes made at intervals during the last few years, may throw some additional light on the natural history of one of the most interesting of American quadrupeds, I communicate them for the information of the Society.

March 1st, 1846.—Received to-day five female opossums, captured last night. One of these had ten young in the pouch; another nine; the third had eleven; the fourth fourteen. They were all very diminutive, and appeared to be nearly the same age—about two or three days. The fifth was a small animal of the preceding autumn, and I was doubtful whether she had been impregnated.

March 3d.—On the evening of this day, I examined my small female opossum. The mammary organs were considerably distended, and I began to suspect that I had erred in my previous conjectures, and concluded to dissect her on the following day.

March 4th.—At 7 o'clock this morning, when prepared to commence my dissection of the opossum, I discovered three young in the pouch, and supposing that so small a female would produce no additional number, I concluded that I would spare her life. She was confined in a box in a room where I was writing. When I occasionally looked at her I found her lying on her side, her body drawn up in the shape of a ball; the vulva appeared to reach the pouch, which was occasionally distended with her paws. At 6 o'clock in the afternoon, as she had appeared very restless for several hours, I was induced to examine her again, when I discovered she had added four more to her previous number, making her young family now to consist of seven. With no inconsiderable labor, and the exercise of much patience, I removed three of the young from the teat, one of which perished under the process. The three weighed twelve grains, averaging four grains each. I replaced the two living ones in the pouch; at 9 o'clock examined her and found the young again attached to the teats.

The young were naked, blind, ears protuberances covered by an integument; mouth closed, with the exception of a very small orifice sufficiently large to receive the small attenuated teat. Tail $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in length.

March 11.—Weighed the largest of the young, and found that it had increased to 30 grains. Length of body $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch, tail $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. The nostrils were now open. The young were very tenacious of life, as on removing two they remained